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- Otter appoints Twin Falls man to vacancy on state Education Board

FROM THE COEUR D'ALENE PRESS

Academies earn the highest praise (Editorial)

Posted: Saturday, May 31, 2008 - 07:17:43 pm PDT
Graduation season features presents, praise and promise.

Pressure, too.

Whether it's high school or college graduation, the celebration is short-lived. Most graduates realize that they'll spend about four times longer in the workaday world than they did in all those hallowed halls of education. When the mortar boards finally come tumbling down, the reality of greater expectations goes up.

But there's time for work later.

Today, let's just rejoice in what Kootenai County's graduating students are accomplishing.

There's a beautiful set of bookends in the Coeur d'Alene School District that illustrate dramatically different approaches to the same ultimate result.

On one hand you have Charter Academy, which attracts stellar students countywide. Charter routinely rakes in the highest percentage of college scholarship money for its graduating seniors, and this year, the school's prestige is at an all-time high.

In its most recent edition, Newsweek magazine ranked Charter No. 544 out of the nation's top 1,300 high schools. Now, you don't see fans waving huge "We're No. 544!" signs in the gymnasium or on the streets, but the accomplishment is significant nonetheless. The 1,300 best high schools in America represent only the top 5 percent of all high schools. So Charter, which ranked second in Idaho to Boise High School, is in the top 2 or 3 percent nationwide.

The other Academy bookend, which celebrated graduation last Tuesday night, is Bridge Academy. We believe that the legacy of soon-to-retire Superintendent Harry Amend will feature Bridge as its brightest star.

As with their predecessors, Bridge Academy's class of 2008 was chock-full of bright, creative kids who had gotten derailed somewhere along the path of more traditional education. Its students complete one course at a time, mastering each subject before moving on to another. The program has saved hundreds of students who might otherwise have flunked out or given up. Tuesday's ceremony was inspirational, emotional and, bluntly, a heck of a lot of fun.

As everyone between these Academy bookends moves down the final aisle of high school experience over the next few days, we hope they hear our applause and accept our heartfelt wishes for success and happiness in the years ahead.

FROM THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Otter fills education position

Businessman will serve five-year term
Jessie Bonner
Associated Press
May 31, 2008

BOISE – Gov. Butch Otter has appointed a Twin Falls businessman to the state Board of Education, filling a seat that has been empty for nearly three months.

Ken Edmunds will serve a five-year term. He fills a vacancy created by the departure of Twin Falls attorney Laird Stone, who was appointed to the board by former Gov. Dirk Kempthorne in 2003 for a term that expired March 1.

Otter announced the appointment Friday.

The 52-year-old Edmunds, a certified public accountant who formerly managed the Price Waterhouse accounting firm in Twin Falls, has more than a decade of experience in property development and investments, and owns several small businesses.

The state Senate will be asked to confirm his appointment during the 2009 Legislature.

The appointment is part of Otter's efforts to improve and restore fiscal responsibility and accountability to the board, which has spent the past several months steering itself back from the financial brink.

"Our first step was to get someone of Ken Edmunds' caliber on there," said Clete Edmunson, the governor's special assistant on education.

Otter is now reviewing the programs the board oversees as he looks to focus the agency more toward education policy and away from oversight of educational programs, a responsibility that should fall to the state Department of Education, Edmunson said.

"We need them to set the policy for the state ... not be so overloaded with managing programs," he said. "We're in the process of looking at the programs the board manages and seeing if those programs can be moved elsewhere."

Edmunds said his appointment is a great opportunity as people look for change within the state Board of Education.

While he brings fiscal expertise to the board, Edmunds said he hopes his contribution will be much broader and include areas of Idaho public education that need improvement, such as reducing high school dropout rates and improving statewide testing methods.

"I'm very much for accountability and testing," Edmunds said. "But I don't know that the testing we're doing is telling us anything."

Northwest educators discuss dropout rates

Conference focuses on minority levels

Associated Press

June 1, 2008

SEATTLE – High school educators have been told that dropout rates for minority students, especially Native Americans, are at crisis levels in six states.

"Our success rate with Native children starts in kindergarten, or in preschool," said Sally Brownfield, the facilitator for the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning in Washington.

The high school educators from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Alaska, Montana and Wyoming met Friday at the University of Washington for a one-day conference.

A panel of experts told the educators that after years of talking about how students need to be properly prepared for school, it's time for schools to start preparing for students.

Brownfield said that's when Native American children first come in contact with "foreign" cultures.

The panelists, made up in part of representatives of the state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, advocated that resources be redirected to help troubled students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Civil Rights Project conference, a national effort by UCLA, catered to educators serving Native American and Alaska Native students in the six states.

Some districts err on the side of optimism, failing to report missing students as dropouts.

"The statistics school districts turn in aren't checked," said Gary Orfield, co-director of the project.

Poverty seems to correlate with graduation rates, according to data presented at the conference. High schools serving low-income areas have much lower "promoting power," which compares the number of freshman and seniors in a given class.

In Washington, schools with 60 percent or fewer seniors, 22 percent of students are Native American, 30 percent black, 29 percent Hispanic, 19 percent Asian and 13 percent white, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

A Johns Hopkins report presented at the conference identified common reasons students drop out:

- Life events such as pregnancies, arrests or a pressing need for a full-time income;
- Frustration or boredom with curriculum that leads them to lose sight of the "reason for coming to school";
- Subtle encouragement or discouragement from teachers or school administrators who label a student "difficult, dangerous or detrimental to the success of the school";
- Repeated failure to succeed.

Schools serving summer meals

PF, CdA provide breakfast, lunch for children ages 1 to 18
Taryn Hecker
Staff writer
May 31, 2008

The Post Falls and Coeur d'Alene school districts will serve breakfast and lunch all summer long.

The only thing children need to bring is an appetite.

Free meals are being served for children ages 1 to 18 at multiple sites throughout the districts as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Service Program.

Coeur d'Alene's program kicks off June 12 and Post Falls will begin serving meals June 16 at some sites.

Meals will be served Monday through Friday at the following locations, times and dates:

- Bryan Elementary, 802 Harrison Ave., Coeur d'Alene. Breakfast is from 8 to 9 a.m. and lunch will be served 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. from June 12 through Aug. 13.
- Ramsey Elementary, 1351 W. Kathleen Ave., Coeur d'Alene. Breakfast is 8 to 9 a.m. and lunch is 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. from June 12 through Aug. 13.
- Canfield Middle School, 1800 E. Dalton Ave., Coeur d'Alene. Breakfast is from 8:30 to 9 a.m. and lunch is 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. from June 12 through July 24.
- Finucane Park, 550 E. Prairie Ave., Hayden. Lunch only from 11:30 a.m. to noon on Thursdays from June 19 through August 7.

- Post Falls High School, 2832 Poleline Ave., Post Falls. Breakfast served from 7:45 to 8:45 a.m. and lunch served from 10:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. from June 15 through Aug. 15.
- Post Falls Middle School, 301 E. 16th Ave., Post Falls. Breakfast is served from 9 to 10 a.m. and lunch from noon to 1 p.m. from June 16 through Aug. 15.
- Seltice Elementary, 1101 N. Chase Road, Post Falls. Breakfast is 8 to 9 a.m. and lunch from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. from June 15 through Aug. 15.
- Ponderosa Elementary, 3483 E. Ponderosa Blvd., Post Falls. Breakfast is 8 to 9 a.m. and lunch is 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. from June 16 through Aug. 15.
- Frederick Post Kindergarten, 201 W. Mullan Ave., Post Falls. Breakfast is 8:30 to 9 a.m. and lunch is 11:20 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. from July 7 through Aug. 8.
- River City Middle School, 1505 N. Fir, Post Falls. Breakfast is 7:30 to 8:15 a.m. and lunch is 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. from June 16 through Aug. 7. Closed the week of June 30 through July 4.

Inside our schools: Borah students celebrate school's birthday

Borah Elementary volunteers Lloyd Roedel, left, and Don Minford attend the Celebrate Community Day assembly at the school in Coeur d'Alene on May 22. The Spokesman-Review (KATHY PLONK The Spokesman-Review)

Taryn Hecker

The Spokesman-Review

May 31, 2008

Ten years ago, a prettier Borah Elementary was little more than a vision.

Now the plain brick walls outside are covered in colorful murals. Pathways weave throughout the playfield. A playground with colorful structures sits not far from a covered picnic gazebo.

There are butterfly gardens and totem poles, and willow trees growing nearby will eventually be woven into a hut for students to explore as part of the school's Nature Play Garden.

Students gathered last week for Community Day, an annual celebration marking the school's birthday and providing a chance to say thanks to the individuals and businesses who have made Borah's Site Enhancement Project a reality.

The project began in 1999 with a \$25,000 grant from the Idaho Community Foundation to improve the exterior of the Coeur d'Alene elementary, which was built in 1951.

Last week's celebration was also a chance to thank those who helped the school in other ways, Principal Bob Shamberg said.

He presented a rap song he had written specially for North Idaho Title, a business that adopted the school a few years ago and has donated T-shirts to students, along with bikes and raffle items and provided every student with a Christmas gift during the holidays.

Charter School receives grant

A grant from the Idaho National Laboratory will help Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy students track their fitness throughout the school year.

Science, PE and health teacher Jeff Rigg received funding to purchase heart rate monitors, pedometers, fitness tracking software and a body fat analyzer.

"As the rate of obesity continues to climb in our youth, and with PE programs vanishing due to budget cuts, if we can make an impact on these youth and provide some understanding of their personal fitness and show them improvement, then the equipment will have served a good purpose," Rigg said.

PE class is the only physical activity some of his students have each week, he said.

Plans under way for updates to Pend Oreille District schools

Patty Hutchens
Correspondent
May 31, 2008

Every vote counts. Bonner County residents learned that lesson on May 20 when, for the second time in three years, a plant and facilities levy for improvements in the Lake Pend Oreille School District went before voters.

In order to pass, the levy required a 55 percent plus one voter approval. When the final votes were tallied, the amount in favor of the levy totaled 55.9 percent, passing by a mere 40 votes.

The last time a plant and facilities levy passed in this school district was 1987. So why did it pass this time and not in the past? According to levy supporters, it was a combination of factors, but primarily community involvement.

"A lot of people felt strongly about the needs (of the schools) and chose to be involved in getting this levy passed," said Wendy Dunn, chairperson of the Citizens for Better Schools Committee. "Also, there was great leadership from Dick (Cvitanich, superintendent of Lake Pend Oreille School District) and the school board. The board was very diligent when looking at the cost to the public and balancing that with the needs of each school."

Cvitanich said he feels a significant difference this time was the number of people involved on the volunteer side.

"We had a wider base of community people volunteering their time," said Cvitanich. "I think we were also able to demonstrate to the community that the need was real."

Now that the levy has passed, the planning process is under way.

"We are very excited to begin this work," said Cvitanich, who adds that the first step is the bid process followed by looking at issues such as asbestos removal, roofing needs, bleachers replacement and replacement of heating and controls systems. "Addressing the health and safety needs is a priority."

According to Cvitanich, the District will open bids after July 1.

But it is not just the district employees who are anxious to have work begin on the buildings, many families are as well. One of those families, the Scrimshers of Sandpoint, knows all too well that a building filled with asbestos or mold can be a detriment to a child's learning.

When Brian and Tamara Scrimsher's daughter, Darbey, was in second grade at one of the Sandpoint elementary schools, she began to experience headaches and became very lethargic while in school. Strangely, her symptoms subsided when she left the classroom.

"We took her to the doctor who said her symptoms were consistent with allergies," said Tamara. "Then the doctor told us that the school was known to have mold." After Darbey started to take allergy medication, her symptoms significantly improved.

After addressing many of the health and safety issues, the district will then focus on the additions to Kootenai and Sagle Elementary Schools as well as installing another modular classroom at Washington Elementary. By adding more space, district officials say the overcrowding they have recently dealt with will be alleviated.

In a town where property values have risen significantly in the past few years, an increase in property taxes is a concern for many, especially those on a fixed income. For the owner of a home with a net taxable value of \$100,000, the levy will increase the homeowner's taxes by \$129 the first year and \$123 the second year. Net taxable value is the value after deducting the homeowner's exemption of \$100,938 for 2008.

But while economic times are difficult, there are many who find that the money spent on the schools is money well-spent.

"It may seem like mold isn't extremely dangerous or life-threatening," said Tamara Scrimsher, "but why should a child have to be medicated to be sent to school?"

FROM THE MOSCOW PULLMAN DAILY NEWS (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Grads enter uncertain world

Poor state of nation's economy, rising cost of living are concerns for high school seniors
By Devin Rokyta, Daily News staff writer

Posted on: Saturday, May 31, 2008

Geoff Crimmins/Daily News

Geoff Crimmins/Daily News

The state of the economy probably is one of the last topics on the minds of most high school students.

However, it is of foremost interest for graduating seniors like Moscow High School student Karen Christian.

"It kind of concerns me that things could keep going downhill and not stabilize," she said.

Christian plans to attend the University of Idaho this fall. Unlike many students, she has received enough money in scholarships to cover many of the ever-increasing costs of attending a university. Her parents also have agreed to help her financially.

That's welcome news to Christian, who hopes to avoid graduating with any accumulated debts in the form of credit cards and student loans.

"My parents tell me to try not to get in debt," she said. "Money makes the world go around, and when you run out it is hard to live."

Christian plans to live on campus her first year of college before potentially looking into less expensive living options.

She has always planned on attending the UI and following in the footsteps of her brother and sister. Had she considered other schools, out-of-state tuition and the high cost of gas likely would have changed her mind.

High living expenses and the increasing costs of food and other household items also made her think twice about living on campus rather than with her parents.

"I basically planned on going to University of Idaho, but (the economy) makes you think about living at home," Christian said. "It's things you don't think about until you live by yourself."

Christian's father, Edward, works in enrollment management at the UI. He said asking his daughter to live at home during college to save money never was a consideration.

"It really has never come into the process," he said. "College is not all about academics, it's also social and living in a community. It's just part of education as far as we are concerned."

Christian plans to major in microbiology. Her father isn't too worried about her finding a job after graduation.

"You can sweat it out for four years that you might not be able to get a job, but you might as well enjoy it," he said.

Alex Mack, who will graduate from Pullman High School on June 7, said the poor state of the economy made him consider working for a couple of years rather than going straight to college. Instead, he decided to work part-time while attending Spokane Community College in Pullman and earn his associate's degree. He hopes to eventually enroll in a culinary arts school.

"I thought it would be a good idea to work and go to school at the same time and get a head start," the 18-year-old said.

To save money, Mack also will live with his father in Palouse.

Fellow Pullman senior Josh Cross, 17, also plans to attend SCC in Pullman before transferring to Washington State University. He also is considering trying to get a job, and would like to work at Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories and participate in a company program that provides money for tuition.

However, Cross said he hasn't given much thought to the country's economic woes.

"I blow it off a lot because I'm just a high-schooler," Cross said. "It'll affect me at one point, but right now I don't have to worry about it."

Julie Kirk, who will graduate from Troy High School today as valedictorian, plans to attend Boise State University this fall.

Atop Kirk's concerns is the increasing cost of gasoline. She hopes to be able to drive home to Troy on holidays to visit her family.

"That may not be an option with gas prices," she said. "That's going to be a big issue for me going to school."

Attending BSU might not have been possible if Kirk hadn't received enough scholarships to cover all of her tuition.

"I was really fortunate to get enough scholarships that will help pay for my school, room and board," she said.

Kirk said she is likely to major in secondary math, although she has a strong interest in politics and government.

She chose her field of study because secondary-math majors are sought after by employers.

"If I stick it out in that field I shouldn't have that many problems," Kirk said. "It's in high demand."

Kirk's main concern for now is just finishing college.

"For me, I am going to go to college and when I graduate I will worry about it," she said.

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FROM THE LEWISTON TRIBUNE (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Lewiston High grad has beaten long odds

Maria Martinez has spent much of her life in foster homes after her parents were imprisoned
By Jodi Walker

Saturday, May 31, 2008

Maria Martinez is set to graduate today from Lewiston High School.

Maria Martinez thumbed through the inches-thick police reports.

The pages told stories of drug addiction, abuse and of her father stabbing her mother.

"It showed me what I was headed for. That is not where I wanted to be."

She was 15, in rehab and at a crossroad.

The path she chose will take her to the platform where she will join more than 300 Lewiston High School classmates today to get her diploma on time, despite the odds.

"My mom is a crackhead and my dad's a Mexican. What else can I say?"

Martinez, now 17, was the second child, born when her mother was 16. She and her brother lived in Burley and Rupert, in the middle of the tumultuous relationship between her mom and her dad, an illegal Mexican immigrant.

"That's when she got into drugs, and she's been in and out of prison ever since."

Her dad also has spent time in prison, was deported and, last she heard, is back in the United States.

When the siblings were little, they lived with their grandmother. But she died when Martinez was 3, leaving the two to bounce around between home and foster homes. It was when Martinez

was 6 and her dad broke down a door and stabbed her mother that parental rights were taken away.

"I am a ward of the state."

Martinez spent her childhood coming to terms with the abuse, physical and sexual, as well as the effects of her mother using drugs and drinking while pregnant.

"I was in a lot of group homes. I was in a mental institution. I was diagnosed with ADD (attention deficit disorder), ODD (oppositional defiant disorder), post-traumatic stress and ... something else. I can't remember."

She fought her way through school, figuratively and actually.

"I was a bully."

She spent seven years in a group home in Boise, a place she thought she would stay.

"There were girls coming and going and they kind of got me into the drug scene."

By her freshman year, she was getting straight Fs in school and was addicted.

She ended up in rehab.

"Most people say (rehab) doesn't help, but it really does, if you let it."

She saw people worse off than her.

"I realized other people needed the space there worse than I did."

Not wanting to tie up the system, she took the first step to a new future: sobriety.

It was a stint at the Idaho Youth Ranch, a place for troubled kids, that set her on the road to success.

"They got me interested in wanting a family, someone to love and care about me."

Her sophomore year was better, but tough because she bounced around to four different high schools.

She was sent to Lewiston and shortly after ended up in a foster home in Clarkston.

"I loved it there. But because it was in Washington and I am a ward of Idaho, I couldn't stay."

Enter Frank and Teresa White of Waha.

"It's been kind of crazy, but it has been kind of fun," she said of moving to the rural White home and settling into Lewiston High School. She considers her caseworker for the past 11 years to be her closest family.

She said the Whites have been good, too.

"They call me all the time and it drives me crazy, but it's good, too," she said.

Her foster parents will continue to be close as Martinez becomes the first person in her family to go to college this fall. Although attending Lewis-Clark State College, she said she doesn't want to live at home.

"I am going to live in the dorms because I want to," she said.

Studying social work seems a natural road for a young woman who has overcome so many obstacles.

But by overcoming those, help for college is abundant. By graduating from the Idaho Youth Ranch, she will receive a scholarship. Because she is a ward of the state, she will get the maximum Pell Grant. Most of her childhood was overseen by a private foster care agency, the Casey Family Program, which will provide scholarship money for housing and books. And because she has no parents, she also gets money from the Independent Living Fund.

All of that will help make her college experience possible. But that hasn't kept her from working. She works part-time at McDonald's and hopes to move into a better paying job after graduation.

In her spare time she can be found at Juniper Meadows painting ceramics with the elderly residents.

"Everything just keeps going in the right direction."

Walker may be contacted at jodiw@lmtribune.com or (208) 848-2275.

Registration under way for summer program at LCSC

Sunday, June 1, 2008

Early bird registration for the Lewis-Clark State College Kids' College summer program is under way now.

Those registering prior to June 15 will receive a \$5 discount per class, with the exception of the Theatre Workshop and the Space and Rocketry Camp. This year more than 50 weeklong classes will be offered covering subjects like arts and crafts, computers and robotics, culture and language, dance, music, recreation, science and math, among others.

Parents can register and pay online at www.lcsc.edu/ce, or by calling (208) 792-2447 or in person at the CECE offices, 415 Main St., Lewiston, in the LCSC Center for Arts and History.

Moscow senior's high school days 'a reality check'

Sara Kimberling graduates Friday after coming back from battle with Cushing's disease

By David Johnson

Monday, June 2, 2008

Sara Kimberling went through some tough times, but she'll be graduating with the rest of her Moscow High School class Friday. Golf's her game, and she was on the school team. MOSCOW - In golf, says Sara Kimberling, do-overs are never part of a serious game. But in life, the Moscow High School senior insists that mulligans must be taken seriously.

"I'm a teenager," says the 18-year-old member of the MHS girls golf team and class of 2008. "I believed nothing could happen to me. So it's been a reality check."

That reality included insomnia.

"I never slept. I'd do all-nighters, two or three days in a row. Pretty much I'd just lay there. I would be so exhausted, but I just could not fall asleep. It was impossible."

Depression.

"I didn't want to do anything because I was so tired. And even if I wanted to, I was too tired to actually do anything. I was a completely different person. My personality changed and I wasn't happy."

Tremors.

"My hands would shake and my arms would shake uncontrollably all the time. It was horrible."

Weight gain.

"Almost 50 pounds," says the daughter of Jon and Sharon Kimberling of Moscow. "I was huge. It was devastating."

It got so bad that Sara didn't play golf her junior year.

"I was so weak. Even getting up to go to breakfast, I was so tired I'd have to go back and rest for a couple of hours."

And what about all those cutting remarks from some of her peers?

"It was mostly girls," says Sara, confiding that she lost some friends during the ordeal. "Yes, it hurt my feelings. But, I don't really know how to say this, it kind of helped me in the long run. It made me stronger."

Sara will be among the 177 MHS graduates receiving diplomas Friday night at the University of Idaho Kibbie Dome. And while the last few years kept her from much of the high school experience, she says her experience with Cushing's disease has given her the kind of introspection no classroom can offer.

"I learned about life, just how to appreciate everything more, I guess."

Guessing, ironically, is what Sara, her parents and doctors seemed to be doing long before the disease was diagnosed.

"I always knew there was something wrong," Sara recalls. "It's like I had it since eighth grade."

She suffered through much of her sophomore year, missed almost all of her junior year (while keeping up with classes at home) and struggled into the first part of her senior year.

Cushing's disease, which results in large amounts of a steroid called cortisol in the blood, is caused by a tumor on the pituitary gland. Only about 600 people nationwide are diagnosed annually with the disease, according to statistics. Surgery to remove the tumor is the most common treatment.

"The pituitary gland is right behind your eyes in the center right under your brain," explains Sara. "To remove the tumor, they went through my nose and cut the bone out behind my sinuses."

But the road to surgery was anything but direct, recalls Sara's parents.

"There's not too many things more challenging than watching one of your kids suffer," says Jon Kimberling, owner of an insurance company in Moscow. "And that was tough. It was like we were on a mission to a destination. And the destination was to help Sara get healthy. But time and again the stops along the way, we just knew we weren't necessarily on the right path."

Enter Sara's mother and the Internet.

"She pretty much diagnosed me," Sara says of her mother.

Armed with test findings that a tumor indeed existed on her daughter's pituitary gland, Sharon Kimberling refused to accept doctors' opinions that the discovery was not causing Sara's symptoms.

"You just don't take no for an answer," Sharon Kimberling says of how she was determined to find an answer. "You just keep going. If you don't find an answer in one place, you go to the next person, and you just keep going. You don't have an option."

Finally she went to the family computer, happened on the symptoms for Cushing's disease and now remembers having an "Ah-hah moment."

"I give Sharon an awful lot of credit," says Jon Kimberling. "There's nothing like a mom looking out for one of her kids."

Sharon Kimberling immediately contacted Sara's doctor and by December 2006 the family was traveling back and forth between Moscow and the Oregon Health and Science University in Portland. Four or five trips later, including one for a week's worth of testing, the diagnosis was confirmed. Sara went through surgery on Dec. 18, 2006, exactly five years after she'd had surgery on both feet when she was in the sixth grade.

"I guess that's kind of my surgery date now," she says.

As it turned out, the successful surgery on the pituitary tumor only marked the beginning of a long recovery. "I remember waking up in the recovery room," says Sara, "and I knew I was better. I don't know if it was psychological or whether my body felt different, or I just kind of knew."

But the turnaround seemed to wane after she came home, recalls Sara. The weight was coming off, but she remained tired and depressed. Her senior year began and she fretted that maybe the tumor was returning.

"We went back over, and everything came back negative," she says of tests. "There wasn't any signs of it and when I got home it just kind of gradually cleared itself up."

Her dad suggests the perceived relapse was more akin to shedding an addiction. "When your body is bombarded with all the extra steroids, as the doctors described it, it's not unlike a drug addict going through withdrawal."

"It just kind of takes over your life," Sharon says of how the disease consumed the family. "It was six or seven months to get weened off the steroids after the surgery." In addition to Sara, the Kimberlings have two other daughters, Kelly, 19, and Emma, 13. "We just have so much to be thankful for."

Sara says she couldn't agree more. Not only her family, but her boyfriend, 18-year-old Jakob Banks, stood by her through the ordeal. "For so long I didn't know what was going on. I didn't know if it was cancer. I didn't know what it was. And it was the scariest thing."

Death, she says, became part of her thoughts. "It always came up," she says of her own mortality. "But I don't know how much I believed it. I mean, I'm a teenager. I was believing that nothing could happen to me. It's been such a reality check. You have to take care of yourself."

Sara plans to attend the University of Idaho this fall. "I really want to study psychology and be a counselor because of everything that happened. Either that or study radiology (at Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston), for the same reason. Now I'm going to just kind of wing it."

While life has offered her a mulligan, Sara quips, nobody offered her a do-over in the recent Idaho High School golf championships. "We have a good group of girls. We finished fourth. I did really bad, but we don't have to talk about that."

Instead, says Sara, she hopes to draw on her struggles through high school, and maybe even golf, as a foundation for the future. "I'm kind of sad because I didn't get to experience it (high school) like everybody else did. But I don't think it's a bad thing. I think I learned a lot more than everybody else had an opportunity to learn."

And her biggest goal?

"That's easy. To be healthy."

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FROM THE IDAHO-PRESS TRIBUNE, NAMPA

Otter appoints Twin Falls man to education board

The Associated Press

Saturday, May 31st, 2008 BOISE — Gov. Butch Otter has appointed Twin Falls businessman Kenneth Edmunds to the Idaho Board of Education for a 5-year term.

Edmunds, an accountant, will fill the trustee post left vacant by Twin Falls attorney Laird Stone, whose term expired in March.

Otter says several candidates were considered for the position, which was announced Friday.

Idaho's superintendent of public instruction Tom Luna says he looks forward to working with Edmunds.

The state board of education supervises public schools in Idaho, oversees colleges and universities and keeps track of testing and grants.

Graduates finish at College of Idaho

Spencer Erickson

sports@idahopress.com

Sunday, June 1st, 2008

CALDWELL — More than 150 College of Idaho students received their college degrees at the school's 117th commencement ceremony at the Morrison Quadrangle on Saturday.

The event started off with the graduates taking their places to the playing of a processional performed by the Boise Royal Highlanders.

Opening up the ceremony was the Board of Trustees Chairman Gerald M. Baur, who welcomed the Class of 2008 and paid tribute to Idaho entrepreneur and philanthropist J.R. Simplot, a major supporter of the college who died May 25. He was 99.

“A week ago today, Idaho lost one of its greatest citizens, J. R. Simplot,” Baur said. “Many of you may remember Jack Simplot’s challenge to get ahold of something and hang on.”

Baur announced that there was a resolution that was passed by the Board of Trustees that will honor J. R. Simplot’s 50 years of service to The C of I and then closed his speech by asking for a moment of silence for the long time supporter.

Following Baur’s sentimental remarks, The C of I President Bob Hoover spoke to the graduates about the college’s lengthy history and traditions and honored the new graduates.

“You have enriched our lives inside and outside of the classroom,” Hoover said. “You are such special students in so many different ways and we will miss you.

“It is clear, you are among the most talented students to graduate from this college.”

Hoover then had the students stand up and cheer and applaud for all the family, friends and teachers that helped them find success over the years.

The graduating class picked Brad Baughman to be their senior speaker.

Baughman, who was editor of the Coyote student newspaper and is a creative writing major, talked to his fellow classmates about their future endeavors.

“You can still be anything you want to be,” Baughman said. “Wherever you are, I know that you will do a great job cause you have already proven yourselves time and time again.”

Two of the graduating seniors were given special awards. Rachel Odio received the Dean’s Award, while Kimberly Miller was awarded the Alumni Distinguished Senior Award.

Idaho Supreme Court Justice Warren E. Jones, who graduated from the college in 1965 gave the commencement address.

Jones gave the students several different words of wisdom and pieces of advice.

“This school has a fantastic history,” Jones, who received an honorary degree, said. “This school turns out the very best of the best and you are all about to become an alumni of that. You have now been given the tools that are necessary to create success.”

Jones emphasized and warned the students to “Don’t want too much, too fast” and to “Prioritize the things in your life.” He closed his speech by reminding the students that, “It is an undeniable truth, that you are the leaders of tomorrow.”

After the ceremony, most of the graduates celebrated with excitement and enthusiasm.

“It feels great,” Baughman said. “It was a long time coming and I am sad to leave but I am ready and excited to get out there.”

Parma graduates say goodbye

Spencer Erickson

sports@idahopress.com

Saturday, May 31st, 2008

PARMA — Saying good-bye to a group of people that you have known for more than 12 years can be quite difficult.

That was the case for Parma High School’s Class of 2008 as they celebrated their graduations with a commencement ceremony at Parma on Saturday.

Many of the seniors said it would be hard to see everyone go their separate ways, considering they were such a close-knit group of students.

“It makes it hard to say good-bye when you are all so close,” Parma Class President and co-valedictorian Kimbra Roche said. “Most of us have been together since kindergarten, so it can be pretty tough.”

Another co-valedictorian, Krista Hafez, agreed that graduation brings out a lot of mixed emotions.

“It is kind of a bittersweet experience,” said Hafez, who will attend The College of Idaho on a full-ride scholarship. “It is exciting to think about our futures, but it is also sad having to leave the people that I have grown up with for the past 12 or 13 years.

“This class did everything together, and we are all just one happy family.”

Over half of the 58 students that graduated received scholarships to help with their future college experiences.

One of those recipients was Juan Corona, Parma’s Senior Class Vice President, who will be receiving nine different scholarships to help him attend the University of Idaho.

“It feels really good to be able to graduate,” Corona said. “It is a great feeling, but kind of scary at the same time.”

The special event marked the end of high school for all of the seniors, but was even more meaningful, considering it marked the 100th commencement ceremony in Parma High School history.

Parma Principal David Carson started off the program by speaking to the graduates about their special day and the importance of their accomplishment.

“Graduation is an opportunity for all of us to step back and see the hard work and determination that these seniors had to possess in order to graduate,” Carson said.

Carson went on to talk about the significance of Parma hitting the 100 years-of-education milestone and paid respect to Parma’s Class of 1908, the first group of students to graduate in the school’s lengthy history.

“We pay tribute to the first graduating class from Parma High School,” Carson said. “By graduating today, you are illustrating that Parma has a history of exceptional education.”

In his valedictorian address, third generation Parma graduate Hal Nielsen also touched on the school’s past.

“Parma has truly had a proud history,” Nielsen said. “It is amazing what can happen in a century.” Nielsen then closed his speech with a challenge to his classmates.

“Let’s go out and make a few impressions that will last,” He said.

Parma junior inspired by others to succeed

Updated 15 hours 14 minutes ago

PARMA — Esperanza Hernandez returned from last month’s Hispanic Youth Symposium in Sun Valley with both scholarship money and important lessons under her belt.

The 17-year-old Parma High junior walked away from the annual statewide conference inspired by the many powerful speakers who addressed the hundreds in attendance. She heard the success stories of people like her who, despite struggles in their youth, were determined to achieve great things.

The Hernandez file

Age: 17

GPA:

Family: Mom, Estella Balderas; step-dad, Rick Balderas; aunt, Ramona Martinez

Activities: Leo’s Club, National Honor Society, Future Hispanic Leaders of America, Drama Club, Partners Club

Hobbies: Hanging out with friends, shopping, dancing.

Future Plans: Hope wants to attend Northwest Nazarene University and become a registered nurse in pediatrics, then attend medical school and become a pediatricianist.

- Please see the STAT Sheet in Caldwell and Nampa for more information about good kids. The STAT Sheet can be found at local businesses, Nampa and Caldwell schools, the Idaho Press-Tribune and city halls.

“It opens your eyes that nothing is impossible,” said Esperanza, who goes by the English version of her Spanish name, Hope.

At the symposium — held every year to motivate Latino students to stay in school and excel — Hope was awarded the \$3,000 Natalie Reyes Memorial Scholarship based on her dynamic participation in the weekend-long conference. She also joined a speech competition and made it to the top 20 finalists.

Her speech was centered on one of the obstacles she has faced and how she now uses that experience to her advantage.

“My dad actually got deported when I was younger and it’s always in the back of my head. I used to use it as something that would bring me down in life, but as I got a little older, I realized that was one of the biggest motivations in my life,” she said.

Watching others in her family cope with their own struggles has given her strength to set high goals for herself.

“My sister is a really big role model,” she said. Growing up, Hope copied her big sister Nicole in every way. She watched as her sister became a young mother and continued her studies to earn her high school diploma.

“I saw her struggle. It really motivated me to keep going. I really admire her because it’s hard to do,” Hope said.

Another role model is Hope’s cousin Angie.

“She graduated from high school and has her bachelor’s. She’s just pretty much one of the family members that made it all the way through. She has her nice house, her nice car. I see her life and I say, ‘That’s what I want.’ I want to make it through and love what I do for a living.”

Hope said she used to think about her future in terms of, “I want to, but I probably won’t make it.” Not so anymore. A young leader, Hope is outgoing and active in school organizations and service work. Fond and protective of children, she plans on attending medical school to fulfill her goal of becoming a pediatrician.

She has already received some training to prepare her for a career in health care, and by the time she graduates next spring, Hope will be a certified nursing assistant.

FROM THE IDAHO STATESMAN

Otter appoints Twin Falls businessman to education board

Read more stories about education online

Anne Wallace Allen - aallen@idahostatesman.com

Edition Date: 05/30/08

Gov. Butch Otter has appointed Twin Falls businessman Kenneth Edmunds to the state Board of Education.

Edmunds will take over the seat held by Laird Stone, whose term expired.

Edmunds term will run five years.

Edmunds, 52, graduated from Brigham Young University. He has a master's degree in accounting and was a certified public accountant and manager for Price Waterhouse, an accounting firm.

He's president of the Idaho Youth Soccer Association, chairman of the Twin Falls Community Foundation, a member of the Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization's board of directors, and serves on a special audit committee appointed by the state Board of Education.

Board members last week named Mike Rush as executive director.

The eight-member state Board of Education sets policy on all matters affecting education in Idaho.

FROM THE TWIN FALLS TIMES-NEWS

T.F. businessman named to Ed Board

Edmunds says

By Andrea Jackson

Staff writer

Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter's pick to fill a seat on the Idaho State Board of Education, which was left vacant for three months, said he's excited to contribute.

"I just want to make a difference," said Kenneth Edmunds, 52, Twin Falls.

Edmunds has worked in investment and development for more than 12 years and was named Friday by Otter.

His term runs to 2013.

Edmunds replaces Laird Stone, a Twin Falls lawyer whose term ended March 1. Edmunds has served on the State Board audit committee since 2006. "Right now, I'm just like you, someone on the outside looking in," he said Friday.

The new member described his purpose on the board as being Otter's appointee.

"My role is I'm representing the governor in education," he said. "The governor made it very clear his biggest concern was getting the board focused on policy."

He said he interviewed with Otter during a facility groundbreaking ceremony at the College of Southern Idaho on May 16.

Otter said in a statement Friday there were other strong candidates for the State Board seat, but Edmunds stood out. "Ken has the professional qualifications and the real world perspective to help the Board of Education achieve its goals of greater accountability and fiscal responsibility while formulating sound and forward-looking education policy for Idaho citizens."

In 2004, Edmunds ran for the state Senate in a competitive three-man Republican primary, largely on an education platform. He came in third in a contest that eventually went to Sen. Chuck Coiner, R-Twin Falls.

State Board trustees came under heavy fire recently from the governor and the state Senate Education Committee for accounting miscues that left the agency with a potential deficit of about \$1.4 million, prompting the board to cancel testing and leave vacant positions unfilled. Financial maneuvering has left the board with a deficit of \$316,000, according to the Associated Press.

The State Board had also faced allegations of violating open meetings laws, and the Senate Education Committee drafted a letter to Otter listing recommendations for the State Board, the Associated Press reported in March.

But Otter never got the letter.

"I can confirm the governor has not received that letter," said Jon Hanian, an Otter spokesman. Hanian said Otter's office has heard about the contents of the letter from media reports.

Sen. John Goedde, R-Coeur d'Alene, said he couldn't immediately provide a copy of the letter to the Times-News, but he said he intends to drop it off personally with Otter. "Every time I've been in Boise the governor's been out of town," said Goedde. "There's nothing in the letter that hasn't been reported in the paper."

Goedde said he wasn't concerned that Otter made an appointment to the State Board before receiving the letter.

The Associated Press detailed some of the letter's recommendations in March, which include giving the governor more power to fire the president of the State Board of trustees. There was also a separate letter, the AP reported, which urged State Board trustees to annually review open meetings laws and spending procedures to ensure they're followed.

The State Board met this week and determined that students weren't prepared to meet the federal standards mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act because of poor statewide education standards exams that failed to accurately measure student performance.

"I do believe in accountability," said Edmunds. "I believe in testing. I'm not certain the way we're testing shows us anything."

Edmunds received a bachelor's degree, and master's degree in accounting, from Brigham Young University. He previously was a senior executive and consultant with Ameristar Casinos, a certified public accountant and manager for Price Waterhouse, and controlled a local development and construction company.

Andrea Jackson can be reached at 735-3380 or Andrea.Jackson@lee.net.

Twin Falls seniors get their diplomas at commencement ceremony

By Andrea Jackson
Staff writer

About 360 seniors packed the gymnasium at the College of Southern Idaho Friday night for the final chapter of their high school careers.

With smiles fixed across many of their faces, they hammed it up for their family members toting cameras and camcorders for the 2008 Twin Falls High School Commencement ceremony.

After 16 years on the Twin Falls School Board, departing member Vera Redman told the graduates to give back. "I hope that you will remember to live the life of giving," she said.

Redman asked the seniors to reflect on two sets of advice. "Believe in something or someone bigger than yourself," she said. "Commit to giving back."

She reminded the cloaked seniors to say thanks to the people in their lives who helped them and believed in them. "There are thousands here tonight," Redman said. "They are here because they believe in you."

Twin Falls High School Principal Ben Allen read off the class' athletic, artistic and academic accomplishments - and applause ensued when he reminded the crowd that the football team broke a two-year losing streak against Jerome.

Seniors laughed when Allen read what he said was their motto: "Stick a fork in it, we're done."

Superintendent Wiley Dobbs, a graduate of the class of 1976, asked other past graduates of Twin Falls High School to rise, and a handful stood proudly.

Then, the president of the class of 1996, Travis Hamilton, took the stage to give the commencement address.

"Don't make an excuse that you're from a little town," said Hamilton, a screenwriter and director who wrote and directed the film "Turquoise Rose."

"Remember your roots," he told the seniors. "It's a big accomplishment to be able to graduate ...#045; Not everyone can do it."

Seventeen valedictorians were honored Friday night along with six salutatorians, and 68 seniors were named to the National Honor Society.

In all, about 380 seniors graduated this year with 360 who walked in the ceremony Friday, said Beth Pendergrass, the school district's spokeswoman.

The CSI gymnasium was packed - each senior was given seven tickets for family members.

A senior party followed the ceremony Friday at the CSI Expo Center.

Andrea Jackson can be reached at 735-3380 or Andrea.Jackson@lee.net

Jerome educator honored by Southern Idaho Learning Center

Staff report

A first-grade teacher at Jefferson Elementary School in Jerome, Carrie Easterly, was honored May 22 by the Southern Idaho Learning Center as "teacher of the year."

Easterly said she was surprised by the recognition.

"I think everyone in our school district, especially at Jefferson Elementary, deserves the award," she said. "I felt blessed that one of my students felt they should nominate me."

The Southern Idaho learning Center has given teacher of the year awards for five years, but this year's award ceremony was open to the public at large for the first time, said Melody Lenkner, Southern Idaho Learning Center director.

"It's a chance for people who work quietly in the classroom to have public recognition for what they do," said Lenkner.

The Southern Idaho Learning Center provides assessments to kids from across the Magic Valley to help people through learning differences. The center is funded through donations, special events, grants and client fees.

Easterly just finished her first year at Jefferson, having previously taught special education with the Twin Falls School District. "I work on trying to build self-esteem with motivation," she said.

Easterly was nominated by a student diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome, a form of autism, who wrote the nomination letter himself, said Lenkner.

About 85 to 90 people attended the recent ceremony held at the Turf Club, Lenkner said.

No time for truancy

Kimberly grad missed one day of school in 13 years

By Sean Breslin

Staff writer

For Joe Lee, the everyday grind of life on the farm translated easily to the classroom.

"Farming's just like school," he said. "You gotta do it or you fall behind."

Lee, 17, just graduated from Kimberly High School. In his 13 years of school, he missed just one day of classes.

"His immune system must be pretty strong," said Jayne Lee, Joe's mother.

Jayne Lee said her son rarely got sick. On those rare occasions that he did feel under the weather, Joe would flatly reject her suggestions that he stay home and rest, Jayne said. She said she had to acquiesce.

"We'd say, 'If you think you can go, go,'" she said.

Joe has a second-degree black belt in tae kwon do, and he plans to study agriculture in the fall at the College of Southern Idaho. He's been raising corn, wheat and barely - and "driving tractors since he was 10-years-old," his mother said proudly.

He's got no plans for his upcoming 18th birthday, but his parents might have some for him.

"I just know my parents are gonna kick me out," Joe joked.

The one day of school he missed was in the first grade, when he came down with the chicken pox. Jayne said she and her husband were on vacation when she got a call about her son. She flew home to be with him, but quickly realized his case of the childhood sickness wasn't severe.

"When I saw him, I thought, 'This is what I flew home for?'" Jayne said.

After a few years, Joe realized his attendance was pretty strong, and decided to try and continue that trend to the end.

"That's always been his goal, to try to get to graduation and not miss any days," Jayne said. "It's not like we pushed him to go."

"I just wanted to get things done," he said.

Sean Breslin may be reached at 208-735-3243 or at sean.breslin@lee.net.

Buhl School Board gives OK for carnival setup

By Blair Koch
Correspondent

After obtaining legal advice, the Buhl School Board agreed to allow the Chamber of Commerce to organize a carnival behind the high school for the Fourth of July.

The decision was made Thursday during a special meeting of the trustees. It was called so the chamber could gather more details about the carnival and work out liability insurance details. The chamber first approached the board May 21.

"We have everything from the chamber, so I think it's a go," said Superintendent Margaret Cox.

Trustees unanimously voted in favor of the proposal after reviewing how the chamber and district would work out location logistics, such as keeping the carnival and visitors off of sprinklers and water run-off banking and berms.

The carnival will be set up for the annual Sagebrush Days festivities over the Fourth of July weekend.

"I'm very excited about the carnival," said Sagebrush Days Chairwoman Holly Langdon. "It's going to be a great thing for the community. Now that we have this nailed down, we can iron out what exactly will be brought in."

Langdon said the carnival company, Schoeppner Shows, of California, plans to set up 10 carnival rides. It also plans to bring three concession stands.

"We always take care of the little kids, and we are trying to make sure the older ones, the teens that can't drive yet, have something too," she said. "They are supposed to bring in a couple larger rides, but what those will be we don't know yet."

Trustee Jim Barker said the move to allow the chamber use of the grounds was the right decision.

"Over the last quarter-century there have been a number of carnivals on school grounds, so this is certainly nothing new," Barker said. "It's always better to be safe than sorry, and neither the chamber nor the carnival had any problems providing what was required. This is a sign that the school district will work together with the chamber and things are moving in the right direction."

Blair Koch may be reached at 208-316-2607 or blairkoch@gmail.com.

FROM THE IDAHO STATE JOURNAL (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Century hires new principal

BY JOURNAL STAFF

POCATELLO — Sheryl Brockett, the principal of Pocatello's Alameda Center, will principal at Century High School.

Brockett has more than 15 years of experience as a middle school and high school administrator, according to School District 25 officials who announced her hiring Friday afternoon.

"Mrs. Brockett has a strong belief in the quality and excellence at Century High School and the traditions they are building," Superintendent Mary Vagner stated in a press release.

Vagner also likes that Brockett has a working knowledge of the district's policies and procedures. Vagner said in the press release that Brockett is known for being fair, honest and consistent with school personnel, students and their families.

Bob Devine, the district's director of secondary education, called her a professional who is skilled in problem-solving and leadership, according to the press release.

Brockett has a master's degree in education from Idaho State University, a bachelor's degree in science from the University of Idaho at Moscow and certifications as a secondary and elementary principal.

Brockett replaces Jim Mc-Coy, who will leave the school after just a year to become a professor. McCoy replaced Pat Charlton, who was Century's first principal.

Brockett said in the press release: "I am excited to have the opportunity to be a part of the Century High School team and look forward to working with the staff, teachers, students and parents. Century is a great school with many strengths, and it will be my privilege to be a part of CHS."

Blackfoot grads get diplomas

Threatening weather bypasses site of annual outdoors rite of passage

BY JOHN BULGER

jbulger@journalnet.com

BLACKFOOT — The dark and ominous clouds scuttled by to the north of the Eastern Idaho State Fairgrounds Friday evening, leaving the Blackfoot High School class of 2008 appropriately bathed, at least for a few moments, in the sun's warm rays.

Teacher Kathy Malm eyed the thunderclouds uneasily.

"I'm still crossing my fingers," she said.

Malm was in charge of this year's graduation exercises. "This is my extracurricular assignment," she said. "It's stressful ... but wonderful."

A near-capacity crowd applauded speakers and performers, and groups playfully disdained the program's instructions to withhold their cheers as the graduates received their diplomas.

The graduation ceremony has been held in the fair's grandstand for the past nine years in an effort to accommodate the huge turnout for the event.

"It's usually close to or over 5,000 that attend," Malm said.

The family of graduate Karl Ramsey Mosho was out in force, perhaps a dozen family members scattered through the crowd. Grandmother Evelyn Wheeler, great-aunt Janice Satanus and great-uncle Willie Preacher were all smiles as they sat in the front row. The family will gather Sunday in Fort Hall for a celebratory dinner.

Co-Valedictorians Ryan Davis and Kayla Carrigan addressed their green and white-clad classmates, offering wisdom and summation.

Davis employed a more theatrical approach, cribbing bits from his favorite television program, "The Office." Students and audience members laughed and smiled as he exhorted his fellow graduates "to join me in annihilating any foe that may face us."

Carrigan offered a more traditional oration, reflecting on the past and foretelling the future.

"Some will never see each other again," she said. "Some will be lifelong friends."

Principal Blaine McNelly faced the daunting task of correctly pronouncing the full names of the 224 students, which he did with aplomb.

As the graduates filed by and posed briefly for photographs, each received a hug from government teacher Holly Kartchner, who had done the same as the students entered the arena.

The graduates represented a gathering of different ethnicities and cultures, Machado and Miles and Mosho uniting together to celebrate their accomplishments and embrace their futures.

Picking graduation speaker

Vote now determines who will give address for Highland High School

BY JOHN O'CONNELL

joconnell@journalnet.com

POCATELLO — Some Highland High School honors students have complained of being passed over due to a change in their school's method of choosing a graduation speaker.

Principal David Ross said that last year there was a three-way tie among the top honors students, so the rest of the senior class voted to choose who would deliver the graduation speech.

Ross said the opportunity to vote proved to be popular among the seniors and gave them an incentive to pay more attention during the ceremony. So this year, Ross said all 18 students who finished with highest honors had the chance to be the speaker. Of those 18 students, 14 expressed an interest, and the senior class chose Jacob Stalnaker to deliver the speech.

"Of course, there were a couple of kids who felt like that wasn't fair because their GPAs were a little bit higher. I apologize that they felt jilted," Ross said. "The other response I got was, 'We got a choice of who are speaker was going to be.'"

Ross believes Stalnaker did a "phenomenal job" and kept the attention of his classmates. He was pleased with the ceremony.

More importantly, Ross was glad to see that none of his students — or any Pocatello graduates for that matter — got into trouble with the law during the celebrations that followed Thursday's graduation ceremony.

"We haven't had any problems with graduation and no reports of underage drinking," Ross said. "For a city our size, it was a great night."

Pocatello police confirmed Ross' assessment of the night.

"I didn't see anything that would involve the high school kids last night," Lt. Scott Marchand said. "I think they do a good job, and you have to give credit to the parents there. They come out and chaperone those things and take care of all of that. It was a quiet night for graduation."

Otter appoints Twin Falls man to State Ed Board

BY JESSIE BONNER

Associated Press Writer

BOISE — Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter has appointed a Twin Falls businessman to the state Board of Education, filling a seat that has been empty for nearly three months.

Ken Edmunds will serve a five-year term. He fills a vacancy created by the departure of Twin Falls attorney Laird Stone, who was appointed to the board by former Gov. Dirk Kempthorne in 2003 for a term that expired March 1.

Otter announced the appointment Friday.

The 52-year-old Edmunds, a certified public accountant who formerly managed the Price Waterhouse accounting firm in Twin Falls, has more than a decade of experience in property development and investments. He now owns several small businesses.

The state Senate will be asked to confirm his appointment during the 2009 Legislature.

The appointment is part of Otter's efforts to improve and restore fiscal responsibility and accountability to the board, which has spent the past several months steering itself back from the financial brink.

"Our first step was to get someone of Ken Edmunds' caliber on there," said Clete Edmunson, the governor's special assistant on education.

Last year, the Education Board trustees came under heavy fire from both the governor and the state Senate Education Committee for accounting miscues that left the agency with a potential deficit of about \$1.4 million, prompting the board to cancel testing and leave vacant positions unfilled. That financial maneuvering left the eight-person board with a much smaller deficit of \$316,000, board spokesman Mark Browning said.

The agency also flubbed an \$18 million federal grant to help low-income students attend college, forcing board president Milford Terrell, who conceded earlier this year the board was a “dysfunctional family,” to ask private foundations for matching state funding so Idaho wouldn’t lose the grant.

Otter is now reviewing the programs the board oversees as he looks to focus the agency more toward education policy and away from oversight of educational programs, a responsibility that should fall to the state Department of Education, Edmunson said.

“We need them to set the policy for the state ... not be so overloaded with managing programs,” he said. “We’re in the process of looking at the programs the board manages and seeing if those programs can be moved elsewhere.”

Edmunds said his appointment is a great opportunity as people look for change within the state Board of Education.

“If those problems opened the door for how we can do things better, that’s a great situation,” he said.

While he brings fiscal expertise to the board, Edmunds said he hopes his contribution will be much broader and include areas of Idaho public education that need improvement, such as reducing high school dropout rates and improving statewide testing methods.

“I’m very much for accountability and testing,” Edmunds said. “But I don’t know that the testing we’re doing is telling us anything.”

FROM THE IDAHO FALLS POST REGISTER (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Otter appoints Twin Falls man to vacancy on state Education Board

By JESSIE BONNER Associated Press

Otter

Ken Edmunds, the owner of several small businesses, will serve a five-year term to replace Laird Stone, who left three months ago.

BOISE -- Gov. C.L. "Butch"

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